

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06 SP-02
SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 NRC-05 IO-13 CEQ-01
DRC-01 /141 W

-----080506 220803Z /16-46

R 210741Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0333
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4409

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 4409 VICE 5409)

THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM WAS SENT ACTION NEW DELHI 20 MARCH
1978 AND IS REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION/INFORMATION.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOMBAY 0705

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH, IN, US
SUBJECT: INDO-US NUCLEAR RELATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 4288

1. DURING MY TALK ON MARCH 17 WITH SETHNA WE DISCUSSED
THE TIMES OF INDIA EDITORIAL OF THAT MORNING. HOWEVER,
SETHNA WAS VERY PRESSED FOR TIME AND OBVIOUSLY WANTED
TO DEVOTE MOST OF OUR DISCUSSION TO OTHER MATTERS
(REPORTED EARLIER) THAT HE CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT.

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2. IN CRYTIC COMMENTS ON THE TIMES EDITORIAL SETHNA
MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A) CONTRARY TO TIMES ASSERTION THERE IS NO NED
TO "STAKE A CLAIM" TO SOMETHING ONE ALREADY OWNS; SUCH
A TACTIC MERELY RAISES QUESTIONS WHERE THEY SHOULD BE
NONE.

B) IN EVENT OF A BREAK IN INDO-US COOPERATION, INDIA'S PROBLEM WOULD BE WHAT TO DO WITH THE SPENT FUEL, NOT IN ESTABLISHING ITS RIGHT OF OWNERSHIP. SETHNA RE-ITERATED THAT PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE EMOTIONS CONNECTED WITH THIS ISSUE HE BELIEVES IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR INDIA TO RETURN THE FUEL TO THE US, AND FOR THE US TO AGREE TO TAKE IT BACK, PAYING OF COURSE PROPER COMPENSATION.

C) IT IS RIDICULOUS TO PROPOSE PIE-IN-THE-SKY USES FOR THE FUEL. REPROCESSING SOLUTION WOULD ONLY EASE THE STORAGE PROBLEM AND ALMOST CERTAINLY IT COULD NOT BE STARTED QUICKLY ENOUGH TO YIELD EVEN THIS BENEFIT.

D) FURTHER STUDIES HAVE CONVINCED SETHNA THAT CREATING A FACILITY TO MAKE MIXED OXIDE FUEL RODS FOR TARAPUR (USING PLUTONIUM FROM REPROCESSING) WOULD BE GROSSLY UNECONOMIC. IF INDIA HAD 10 LWRS LIKE TARAPUR, THE MIXED OXIDE APPROACH WOULD BE FEASIBLE BUT IAEC COULD NEVER AMORTIZE THE HIGH CONSTRUCTION COST FROM PRODUCTION FOR TARAPUR ALONG.

E) EDITORIALS LIKE TO ONE IN THE TIMES WILL CONTINUE AS LONG AS XSNM 1060 IS DELAYED BUT THEY ARE MAKING CONFIDENTIAL

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EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THE RESOLUTION OF ALREADY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS.

F) AT LEAST THE TIMES IS BEGINNING TO GET ITS FACTS STRAIGHT. I OBSERVED THAT WHILE THE THRUST OF THE EDITORIAL IS CONTENTIOUS AND DISTURBING I FOUND ONLY ONE CLEAR FACTUAL ERROR AND THAT WAS THE STATEMENT THAT "THE US HAD EARLIER AGREED TO INDIA BUILDING A FAIRLY EXTENSIVE FACILITY AT TARAPUR FOR REPROCESSING." I POINTED OUT THAT AS HE KNEW, WE HAD NEVER AGREED IN ANY FORMAL SENSE TO THIS CONSTRUCTION. INDIA HAD KNOWN FROM THE BEGINNING THAT OUR APPROVAL WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE US FUEL COULD BE REPROCESSED THERE.
COURTNEY UNQUOTE
GOHEEN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS RELEASES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NUCLEAR FUELS, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE04409
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780125-1085
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780343/aaaabjuy.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fd3661c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 NEW DELHI 4288
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3256194
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDO-US NUCLEAR RELATIONS
TAGS: TECH, IN, US, (SETHNA, HOMI N)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fd3661c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014